

Serial No. 09/756,997
Art Unit: 2822

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please delete the Abstract, and replace it with the following rewritten Abstract:

-- Polymer blobs that are development related defects are substantially eliminated in patterned photoresist masks by a heat treatment of the wafer performed at a development step in two different manners according to the present invention. In the first method, after the development has been performed as standard, the wafer is heated at 140°C and before cooling takes place, it is rinsed with deionized water (DIW) at room temperature. In the second method, the wafer is either developed as standard but rinsed with 60°C DIW instead of 22°C DIW, or, after standard development, it is submitted to an extra rinse step with 60°C DIW.--

IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly cancel claim 12 in its entirety.

Kindly amend claims 1-4, 6-7, and 9-10 to appear as follows, all without prejudice:

1. (Amended) A method for eliminating polymer blobs in a photoresist mask formed at the surface of a semiconductor wafer, comprising the steps of: